

REMARKS

This Amendment is pursuant to the Office Action mailed March 11, 2005.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 4, 5, 7, and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gevaert (U.S. 6,179,381). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Initially, it will be noted that independent claims 1, 5 and 12 have each been amended to more positively recite that the single cable that is routed into the seat assembly supplies power to at least one of the independent electronic components, as well as enables communication capability for at least one of the electronic components. Independent claim 1 has further been amended to more positively recite that the electronics distribution subsystem receives power from the cable and supplies power to each of the independent electronic components, as well as interfaces with said one electronic component to enable communication with a subsystem located remotely from said seat. Independent claim 12 has been amended along lines similar to independent claim 1.

The subject matter of independent claims 1 and 5 is not shown or suggested by Gevaert. Gevaert is directed to a seat assembly in which power is routed to each of the seats that are grouped as a single row of seats, such as what may be used in a lecture hall, theater, etc. A completely separate conductor is used to conduct data from data ports 46 associated with the seat row. There is no single “electronics distribution system” associated with any one of the seats in the row, or the row as a whole, that enables interfacing with all of the electronic components associated with each seat. The

closest Gevaert comes to disclosing this feature is the use of power/data divider component 128 (figures 5-7). However, this component is merely used to separate data lines 108 from the electrical wires passing through the wireways 66A-66C. The purpose of the power/data divider 128 is stated to provide physical separation between the data lines and the electrical wires to prevent any adverse interaction between these two conductors. Thus, Gevaert has absolutely nothing to do with using a single electronics distribution system to supply both power and data communications capability to each of a plurality of electronic components associated with a single seat. There is further no component disclosed or suggested in Gevaert that remotely could be viewed as performing these multiple functions. With the seating system of Gevaert, it appears that a separate subsystem located remotely from the seat row would be required to perform the power and data signal management functions that are performed by the power converter 77 or router 78 employed in the preferred embodiments of the present application. Gevaert is not clear as to whether multiple electronic subsystems located remotely from the seating row would be required to manage the power and data communications functions associated with each seat row. For this reason, reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 103 rejections of independent claims 1 and 5, based on Gevaert, is respectfully requested.

Claims 12-14, 16, 18, and 28 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gevaert, in view of the prior art figure 1 of the present application. Again, this rejection is most respectfully, yet strenuously, traversed.

The prior art figure 1 of the present application merely illustrates and discloses that multiple SEB/SEU boxes 30 are required, one for each particular electronic

component associated with each specific seat. Thus, for example, if three specific electronic components are associated with the seat, then three such SEB/SEU boxes 30 would be required. There is nothing in Gevaert or in the prior art figure 1 (or in its related discussion in the present application) that would suggest to one of ordinary skill in the art to integrate power and communications capability to every single electronics component of the seat via a single power converter 77 or router 78 that interfaces each of the electronic components with a single cable running into the seat. As explained above, Gevaert discloses using separate cables for power and data communications capability, and does not mention anything whatsoever regarding controlling these functions via a single electronic distribution subsystem that is mounted at the seat, which handles power and data communications for all of the electronic components associated with a single seat.

As also noted above, minor amendments have also been made to claim 12 to even more positively point out the dual power/communications function provided by the distribution subsystem. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections to claims 1, 5 and 12 is therefore respectfully requested.

In view of the amendments made to independent claims 1, 5 and 12, it is believed that the rejections of the dependent claims have been rendered moot.

SPECIFICATION

Minor amendments have been made to the specification to improve the readability thereof. No new matter has been entered.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: May 9, 2005

By: 
Mark D. Elchuk Reg. No. 33,686

HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.
P.O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600

MDE/sls/lf-s/jo